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Press PRESENTS

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CANADA

Cases
Of

Sherlock Holmes

SIR
ARTHUR
CONAN
DOYLE

DAN & DAVID DAY

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Sometimes it is easier to talk about something than it is to do it. I look around me and I see that most of us have very little we care deeply about. Oh yes—we have people we love, but that isn't what I am writing about. Most of us just go our own way, living our own lives. We **mean** to do something about things that bother us, that we know deep inside are wrong, but somehow there is never time to spend checking out the solutions. Sometimes a performer you enjoy writes about something, perhaps the arms race, and you feel angry right along with him. Righteous anger... boy that sure feels good! But somehow you never get around to writing a letter to Mr. Reagan about it, or even your local representative. I'm no different from you. I do, however, vote. (Or at least I did in Canada... I can't here. But that's another topic entirely) When I lived in Canada I voted, and not just in the nationals, but **every** election. The point I am trying to make is—even with the apathy as rampant as we all know it is... get out and vote. Read about the issues first, and make some intelligent decisions. Actually, I would settle for simply an informed decision. Many states have various propositions coming up, find out about them before going to that polling station. It's so easy to let things we **could** care about get lost in the shuffle of day-to-day life. If you are thinking "yes, but how do I go about this?", put this comic down and pick up the telephone book. Look up your local "Registrar of Voters" for your city. They will tell you how to register, and once you are on their list you will be mailed newsletters from your State Senator and Assemblyman, along with general information about upcoming proposals. You can find out more from there. Maybe you CAN'T change the world overnight—but don't think your voice doesn't count. Every voice counts. Maybe by reading first about the choices you will find you want to get more involved. Maybe. There IS more to life than books and movies, friends and parties. "They're pickin' up the prisoners and puttin' 'em in a pen, And all she wants to do is dance, dance!"

written by Danny Kortchmar
sung by Don Henly

Is this you?

Deni



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Sir Arthur
Conan
Doyle's

CASES OF
Sherlock Holmes
IN

The STRANGE ADVENTURE OF The VOIRDALAK

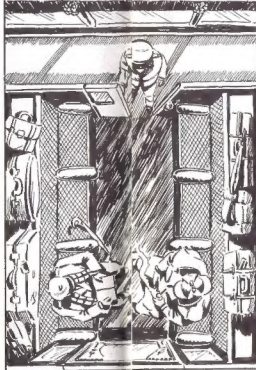
Story: Gordon Derry
Art: Dan
Day



I WAS IN THE SPRING OF 1887 THAT I WAS CALLED TO THE AID OF MY FRIEND, SHERLOCK HOLMES, AS HE LAY ILL IN THE HOTEL DULING IN LYONS, FRANCE. HOLMES HAD EXHAUSTED HIMSELF IN SOLVING THE MATTER OF THE NETHERLANDS-SUMATRA COMPANY ON THE CONTINENT. WHEN I FOUND HIM IN HIS DIM, DISHEVELLED HOTEL ROOM THAT SPRING MORNING, I KNEW THAT I MUST GET HOLMES BACK TO HIS FLAT ON BAKER STREET IN LONDON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ONE GLANCE TOLD ME HE WAS ON THE BRINK, NAY BEYOND THE BRINK OF NERVOUS EXHAUSTION. I SOON LEARNED THAT HE HAD BEEN WORKING ON THE CASE NO LESS THAN FIFTEEN HOURS A DAY, WITHOUT PAUSE, FOR OVER TWO MONTHS. EVEN FOR A MAN OF REMARKABLE RESOURCES LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES, SUCH SUSTAINED EXERTIONS WERE PHYSICALLY INTOLERABLE. WITH HASTE I LOADED HIM ON TO THE TRAIN AT THE LYONS STATION, HAVING EVERY EXPECTATION THAT WE WOULD BE AT CALAIS FOR THE CHANNEL CROSSING IN TWO DAYS. IN FACT, I HAVE STATED ELSEWHERE THAT THE TRIP BACK TO LONDON WAS COMPLETED IN THREE DAYS. THIS, I CONFESS NOW, WAS A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO MISLEAD MY READERS

AND AVERT ATTENTION FROM THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF THE VOIRDALAK. TRUTHFULLY, THE TRIP TOOK AN ENTIRE WEEK. WHAT CAME TO PASS DURING THOSE ADDITIONAL FOUR DAYS WAS AN AFFAIR SO FANTASTICAL IN NATURE THAT NEITHER HOLMES NOR I COULD SEE FIT TO REVEAL THE SENSATIONAL EVENTS TO THE PUBLIC. THOUGH HOLMES' NAME WAS BY NOW KNOWN AND RESPECTED THROUGHOUT EUROPE, WE FELT THE TALE OF THE VOIRDALAK MURDERS MIGHT DESTROY THAT HARD-WON REPUTATION. I CAN ONLY TRUST THAT THE PRESENT AUDIENCE IS TOLERANT AND OPEN-MINDED ENOUGH TO ACCEPT THIS STORY AS PURELY FACTUAL. IT BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH, WITH THE EXPRESS TRAIN TO PARIS WINDING ITS WAY ACROSS A FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE BURSTING WITH THE

VIBRANT HUES OF SPRING. WITHIN OUR PRIVATE COMPARTMENT, HOLMES WAS QUIET AND WITHDRAWN. HIS COLOUR WAS NOT GOOD, BUT HIS APPETITE WAS THAT OF A RAVENOUS BEAST. "HOLMES," I SAID AS WE DINED ON OUR UNREMARKABLE RAILWAY MEAL, "WHAT YOU NEED IS SOME OF MRS. HUDSON'S GOOD ENGLISH COOKING TO SET YOU STRAIGHT. THAT AND A LONG SPELL OF REST." HE MERELY SCOWLED AT THE LATTER SUGGESTION. I ADDED, "YOU REALLY MUST TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE AWAY FROM LONDON." "I LIVE FOR THE CHASE, WATSON!" HE SAID, WITH SUDDEN INTENSITY. "IT IS THE EXCITEMENT OF INVESTIGATION AND DEDUCTION THAT MAKES ME COME ALIVE. I DETEST THE DULLNESS OF ROUTINE EXISTENCE. SHALL I SET ABOUT MY FLAT ON BAKER



STREET, ALONE, AND DIE OF BOREDOM?" I STIFFENED, AWARE OF THE HURT BETRAYED BY THAT SINGLE WORD, "ALONE." I HAD NOT REALIZE UNTIL THAT MOMENT THAT MY MARRIAGE AND REMOVAL FROM 221B BAKER STREET HAD AFFECTED HIM SO STRONGLY. BUT THIS WAS NOT THE ONLY NEW REVELATION I WAS TO HAVE REGARDING MY FRIEND ON THIS JOURNEY. "HOLMES, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU MAINTAIN YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH," I SAID. "FOR REMEMBER THAT THE BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE SOUL." HOLMES WAVED HIS HAND IMPATIENTLY, REJOINING, "I SHALL LEAVE THE POETRY TO YOU, WATSON. FOR ONCE, I ADMIT DEFEAT. MY BODY HAS GIVEN OUT, THOUGH MY MIND HUNGERS FOR FURTHER STIMULATION. I SUBMIT TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE, MY GOOD DOCTOR. I SHALL INDEED

REST." PROMPTLY HE FELL ASLEEP. WHILE THE TRAIN ROLLED SWIFTLY ACROSS THE BREADTH OF FRANCE, I IMMERSSED MYSELF IN A COPY OF THE COLLECTED WORKS OF EDGAR ALAN POE. AT THE TIME, I RECALLED, I WAS FASCINATED WITH THE STORY OF "THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE," AND MENTIONED AS MUCH TO HOLMES ON ONE OF HIS BRIEF AWAKENINGS. HE SNEERED, DISMISSING POE'S WORK AS SENSATIONAL AND LACKING IN REAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE OF DETECTION. AT PARIS WE BOARDED THE CALAIS COACH, AND SPED NORTHWARD. THE WEATHER TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE, LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW, I SAW THAT SPRING HAD BEEN DRIVEN OFF BY COLD WINDS FROM THE SEA. RAIN AND SLEET DRENCHED THE COUNTRYSIDE. HOLMES STIRRED FROM HIS SLUMBER WHEN WE WERE PAS-

SING OVER THE SOMME RIVER. AFTER GLANCING OUTSIDE, HE REMARKED, "GATHER YOUR BAGS TOGETHER AND PUT ON YOUR COAT, WATSON. WE WILL BE LEAVING THE TRAIN SHORTLY." "HOLMES, CALAIS IS MANY HOURS AWAY YET. YOU ARE SURELY MISTAKEN." I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT WOULD MAKE HIM SAY SUCH A THING. POOR FELLOW, I THOUGHT, HE MUST BE DELIRIOUS FROM HIS FEVER. "MARK MY WORDS, WATSON. WE WILL BE OFF THIS TRAIN." HE SAID NO MORE ON THE SUBJECT AND, WITH HIS CLOAK WRAPPED ABOUT HIM, FELL BACK TO SLEEP. I LEFT MY BAGS WHERE THEY WERE, AND MY COAT FOLDED OVER MY LAP. CASUALLY I GLANCED DOWN AT MY POCKET WATCH. IT WAS A QUARTER OF SIX IN THE EVENING. AT PRECISELY TWO MINUTES AFTER SIX O'CLOCK, THERE CAME A KNOCK ON OUR COMPARTMENT DOOR. THE CONDUCTOR SLID IT OPEN JUST FAR ENOUGH TO STICK HIS MUSTACHIOED FACE THROUGH, AND SAID IN FRENCH, "MESSEURS, WE WILL BE STOPPING OVERNIGHT AT THE TOWN OF ARREVILLE. THERE HAS BEEN AN UNEXPECTED DELAY, BUT WE HOPE TO HAVE IT CORRECTED TOMORROW MORNING."

"WE ARRIVE AT THE ABBREVIATED STATION IN THREE MINUTES."



WHEN THE CONDUCTOR HAD LEFT, I GLANCED ACROSS AT HOLMES TO SEE HIM SMILING FAINTLY. "WHY, HOLMES?" I CRIED, "YOU MUST HAVE ACQUIRED A TOUCH OF CLAIR-VOYANCE ALONG WITH YOUR ILLNESS. HOW IN THE WORLD DID YOU GUESS?"



"I DO NOT GUESS, BUT DEDUCE, WATSON. I SUSPECT THAT IF YOU HAD SPENT AS MUCH TIME AND ENERGY AS I ON SHARPENING THE POWERS OF OBSERVATION AND REASON, YOU, TOO, WOULD HAVE DEDUCED AS MUCH." THE TRAIN BEGAN TO GRIND TO A HALT. "COME, WE MUST FIND A DECENT INN AND SECURE A ROOM WITH A FIREPLACE FOR THE NIGHT."

HE ROSE FEEBLY, STILL DRAWN AND PALE FROM HIS PAST EXERTIONS. WHILE HOLMES ADJUSTED HIS CLOAK AND DEERSTALKER CAP, I THREW ON MY COAT AND CALLED FOR A PORTER. AS WE DESCENDED FROM THE TRAIN, WE SAW THAT THE SMALL TOWN WAS BUSTLING WITH ACTIVITY. ALONG A STREET PARALLEL TO THE RAILWAY TRACKS WAS A LONG LINE OF COLOURFUL WAGONS. SOME WERE PAINTED A SINGLE GARISH HUE, WHILE OTHERS HAD CRUDE, OUTRAGEOUS MURALS DECORATING THEIR SIDES.

"GYPSIES?" I WONDERED. "SOME ARE DEFINITELY OF THE ROMANY RACE," HOLMES REMARKED, GESTURING TO A GANG OF MEN CLUSTERED ABOUT A WAGON WITH THE IMAGE OF A CRYSTAL BALL ON ITS SIDE. "I HAVE ALSO GLIMPSED SLAYS FROM VARIOUS NATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE, AND TURKS SPORTING AN ARRAY OF THROWING KNIVES."

I SAW THE FIGURES HOLMES REFERRED TO Huddling UNDER THE EAVES OF THEIR WAGONS AS THE RAIN POURED DOWN. "A TRAVELLING FAIR!" I EXCLAIMED WITH DELIGHT. "I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE IN YEARS. PERHAPS IT IS OUR GOOD FORTUNE THAT THEY ARE HERE WITH US. IT MIGHT PROVE ENTERTAINING."



"FORTUNE HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH IT, WATSON. THE CARAVAN IS HERE FOR THE SAME REASON WE ARE." WHEN I STARED AT HIM BLANKLY, HOLMES SIGHED AND EXPLAINED, "THE BRIDGE, WATSON! JUST NORTH OF THIS TOWN, THERE FLOWS A TRIBUTARY OF THE SOMME RIVER. ITS NAME ESCAPES ME NOW, BUT I RECALL PASSING OVER IT ON MY WAY SOUTH. THE BRIDGE IS BROAD, BUILT FOR A ROADWAY AND RAILWAY TRACKS. AS YOU MAY HAVE OBSERVED, THERE WERE NUMEROUS UPROOTED TREES ALONG OUR WAY, OBVIOUSLY THERE HAS BEEN A SEVERE STORM. WHEN I SAW FOLK CAMPED IN THEIR WAGONS ALONG THE ROADWAY, I KNEW THE BRIDGE MUST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY THE STORM. THE SOMME WAS EXTRAORDINARILY HIGH ON ITS BANKS."

WHEN WE CHECKED INTO A SMALL, RESPECTABLE INN, I LEARNED FROM THE CONCIERGE THAT HOLMES WAS CORRECT. THERE HAD BEEN A FLOOD EARLIER THAT DAY, AND A PORTION OF THE BRIDGE HAD COLLAPSED. WORKMEN WERE BUSY REPAIRING IT, BUT IT WAS A GRAND TASK.

"BETTER RESERVE OUR ROOM FOR AT LEAST TWO NIGHTS," HOLMES ADVISED ME. BY NOW I KNEW I SHOULD NOT QUESTION HIS JUDGEMENT. IT SEEMED THAT EVEN IN HIS WEAKENED CONDITION, HIS MENTAL FACULTIES WERE AGUTE.

A FINE, HOT MEAL WAS SERVED TO US IN OUR CHAMBER, AFTER WHICH HOLMES IMMEDIATELY RETIRED. I THREW SEVERAL EXTRA BLANKETS OVER HIM AS HE DOZED OFF, AND STOKED UP THE FIRE IN THE HEARTH. THEN I RETURNED TO MY BOOK OF POE WITH, I MUST CONFESS, A RATHER MACABRE RELISH.



I READ UNTIL LATE IN THE NIGHT. I HAD JUST PUT DOWN MY BOOK AND WAS ABOUT TO CRAWL INTO MY BED WHEN A LOUD KNOCKING SOUNDED ON THE DOOR. I HESITATED. THE CALLER WAS QUITE INSISTENT WITH HIS POUNDING. CANDLESTICK IN ONE HAND, AND A RAISED POKER IN THE OTHER, I MOVED TO THE DOOR. "WHO IS THERE?" I ASKED THROUGH THE PANELS.



"PARDON, MONSIEUR, BUT IS THIS THE CHAMBER OF THE CONSULTING DETECTIVE, SHERLOCK HOLMES?" THE VOICE HAD A STRONG FRENCH ACCENT, BUT THE ENGLISH ENUNCIATION WAS IMPECCABLE. I KNEW THIS TO BE A WELL-EDUCATED CALLER, MOST LIKELY A GENTLEMAN. I OPENED THE DOOR A CRACK, AND INQUIRED AFTER THE CALLER'S BUSINESS.

"MON DIEU!" DECLARED A PLUMP, MUSTACHIOED FELLOW DRESSED IN A NAVY BLUE CLOAK. "YOU MUST BE THE FAMOUS DOCTOR WATSON! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM INSPECTOR CUISINEAU OF THE ARBBVILLE SURETE. I APOLOGIZE FOR THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR, BUT I HOPE I MIGHT CONSULT WITH MONSIEUR HOLMES ON A MATTER OF UTMOST URGENCY."

"INSPECTOR, MISTER HOLMES IS QUITE ILL. I AM AFRAID, HE IS IN NO CONDITION TO TAKE VISITORS, NO MATTER HOW URGENT THE..."

"LET INSPECTOR CUISINEAU IN, WATSON," HOLMES SAID FROM CLOSE BEHIND ME. "I AM NOT DEAD YET, AND I JUDGE THAT THERE IS ENOUGH BREATH LEFT IN ME TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS FOR THE LOCAL POLICE."

"REALLY, HOLMES," I SAID, TURNING TO HIM, "I MUST ADVISE YOU THAT THIS IS MOST UNWISE." HOWEVER, I KNEW BY THE KEENNESS OF HIS EYES THAT FURTHER ARGUMENT WAS FUTILE. I OPENED THE DOOR TO ALLOW THE INSPECTOR TO ENTER. SLUMPED AND TIRED, HOLMES SHUFFLED TO A CHAIR AND SAT DOWN.



"DOCTOR WATSON IS MUCH MORE THAN A FIGURE OF THE POULUAR PRESS," HOLMES STATED WITH A MEASURE OF SHARPNESS. "HE IS MY MOST VALUED ASSISTANT, AND HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SOLVING MANY OF MY CASES."

"C'EST VRAI? THEN I AM MOST ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO FIND YOU BOTH HERE IN ARBBVILLE. YOU SEE, I HAVE COME UPON A CASE THAT I AM SURE YOU WILL FIND MOST INTRIGUING — AND CHALLENGING."

I WAS ABOUT TO PROTEST MY FRIEND'S ILL HEALTH ONCE AGAIN, BUT HOLMES SILENCED ME WITH A LOOK. HE WAVED FOR THE INSPECTOR TO GO ON. I SANK INTO A CHAIR, QUITE UPSET BUT KNOWING FULL WELL THAT I WOULD BE UNABLE TO STOP HOLMES IF HE DECIDED TO TAKE UP THIS CASE. HIS EYES BURNED WITH A FEVERISH LIGHT, AND HE SEEMED TO COME ALIVE AGAIN AS THE INSPECTOR RELATED HIS STRANGE TALE.

"IT IS A MATTER OF MURDER, MONSIEUR HOLMES. NOT ONE BUT THREE. AND THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK THE AFFAIR WILL END HERE."

"IT IS THIS DAMNABLE TRAVELLING FAIR — THAT STRING OF RAGGED AND GAWDY CARAVANS YOU UNDOUBTEDLY SAW FROM THE TRAIN. THERE ARE GYPSIES, TURKS AND FOLK FROM COUNTLESS TINY BALKAN STATES, NOT TO MENTION A GANG OF SWORD-WIELDING COSSACKS. THEY HAVE BEEN TOURING ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, CAUSING AN UPROAR WHEREVER THEY STOP TO PERFORM. OH, THE FRENCH FOLK

THE INSPECTOR WAS A TALL, WELL-ROUNDED MAN, WITH HEAVY JOWLS AND A PROMINENT NOSE. HE HAD DARK, STRAIGHT HAIR, AND A THIN MUSTACHE. AS HE REMOVED HIS DAMP CLOAK, I SAW THAT HE WORE A POLICEMAN'S UNIFORM. THERE WERE FAR MORE BRASS BUTTONS AND BROCADE THAN A PROPER LONDON BOBBY WOULD WEAR. HE RUSHED OVER TO SHAKE HOLMES' HAND ENTHUSIASTICALLY. "MONSIEUR HOLMES, WHAT A GRAND HONOUR IT IS! ALL OF FRANCE IS ASTIR WITH THE NEWS OF YOUR DARING EXPLOITS IN THE MATTER OF THE NETHERLANDS-SUMATRA COMPANY. ALL OF EUROPE, NO DOUBT! TRULY YOU ARE THE GREATEST DETECTIVE ALIVE TODAY, AND AN INSPIRATION TO ALL IN OUR PROFESSION."

HOLMES NODDED WITH LITTLE ENTHUSIASM. HE HAD LEARNED FROM MANY UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES THAT THE OFFICIAL POLICE OF ANY NATION WERE OFTEN PRIDEFUL, INEFFICIENT, AND OVERBEARING. HE DID NOT LIKE TO BE GROUPED WITH THEM.

"AND DOCTOR WATSON, THE CHRONICLER OF THE GREAT DETECTIVE'S EXPLOITS," THE INSPECTOR SAID, TURNING NOW TO SEIZE MY HAND.



LOVE THEM, TO BE SURE. BUT JUST THE SAME, I HAVE HAD NO END OF PETTY COMPLAINTS ABOUT CERTAIN CHARLATANS AND PICKPOCKETS WHO SEEM TO TRAVEL AMONG THEM.

"NONE OF THESE MINOR CRIMES TRULY BOTHERS ME, MONSIEUR HOLMES. SUCH IS TO BE EXPECTED, AND INDEED THE LIFE OF A SMALL-TOWN INSPECTOR WOULD BE QUITE DULL WITHOUT THEM. MURDER, HOWEVER, A SERIES OF MURDERS AT THAT, IS ANOTHER MATTER.

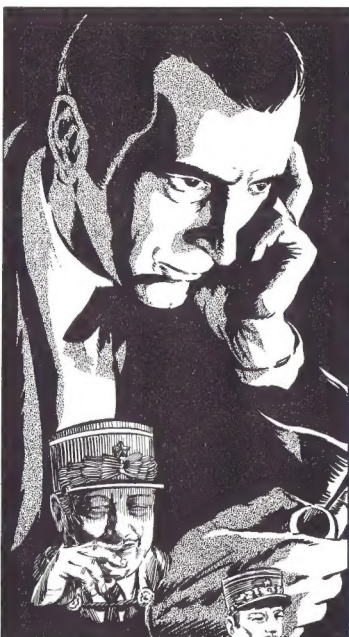
"THE FIRST OCCURRED SOME TWENTY KILOMETERS SOUTH OF HERE. A SERBIAN WOMAN WAS FOUND IN THE MIDDLE OF A FARMER'S FIELD ONE MORNING. SHE DIED IN THE FARMER'S ARMS, MOANING ABOUT A GREAT FURRED BEAST WITH HUGE FANGS AND CLAWS. SHE CLAIMED IT WAS A WOLF OF SOME SORT. IN FACT, IT WAS REPORTED TO ME THAT THERE WERE LARGE ANIMAL PRINTS IN THE MUD NEAR WHERE SHE WAS FOUND."

"PRECISELY WHEN DID THIS OCCUR?" ASKED HOLMES, SITTING RIGID IN HIS CHAIR.

THE INSPECTOR THOUGHT A MOMENT. "THREE WEEKS AND FOUR DAYS AGO."

"VERY GOOD, INSPECTOR. THIS SERBIAN WOMAN WAS A MEMBER OF THE TRAVELLING FAIR, I PRESUME."

"YES, ONE OF A TROUP OF ACROBATS. THE NEXT DEATH CAME ONLY THREE NIGHTS AGO, JUST OUTSIDE OUR TOWN. THIS TIME, IT WAS A MAN, A TURK, A KNIFE-THROWER, I BELIEVE. THIS MATTER I ATTENDED TO PER-



SONALLY. ONCE MORE, IT WAS THE WORK OF SOME HUGE, FEROCIOUS BEAST. THE MAN WAS FOUND DEAD, HIS BODY TORN BY FANG AND CLAW. A TRULY GHASTLY SIGHT!"

"AND THE THIRD MURDER?" I ASKED, CAUGHT UP IN THE EXCITEMENT OF THE CASE.

"IT HAPPENED THIS VERY NIGHT! ON THE SOUTH BANK OF THE SOMME. AGAIN, IT WAS A TURKISH MAN WHO WAS SLAIN. FOOTPRINTS, CLEARLY THOSE OF A WOLF, WERE FOUND IN THE MUD ALONGSIDE THE BODY."

HOLMES STRUGGLED TO RISE FROM HIS CHAIR. "YOU HAVE NOT MOVED THE BODY, I HOPE!" HE GASPED. HIS MOVEMENTS HAD MADE HIM SHORT OF BREATH.

"NO, MONSIEUR HOLMES. I HAD HOPED THAT YOU MIGHT COME TO VIEW THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND PERHAPS UNCOVER A CLUE I HAVE MISSED. FRANKLY, THIS MATTER HAS ME BAFFLED. AND THE EXPLANATION THE SERBS AND COSSACKS OFFER IS TOTALLY OUTLANDISH."

"WHAT S THAT?" I ASKED. THE INSPECTOR PAUSED, AS IF EMBARRASSED TO STATE IT. "THEY SAY THESE DEATHS ARE THE WORK OF A BEAST THEY CALL A VOURLAK. I BELIEVE THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENT IS... WEREWOLF."

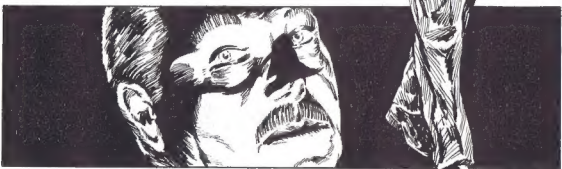
"WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT!" HOLMES SAID, RISING FROM THE CHAIR. "INSPECTOR CUISINEAU, IF YOU WILL HAVE A CARRIAGE SENT ROUND FOR US WITHIN A QUARTER HOUR, DOCTOR WATSON AND I WILL MEET YOU ON THE RIVERBANK PROMPTLY."

THE FRENCHMAN BOWED, THEN SHOOK BOTH OUR HANDS ONCE MORE. "THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH, MESSIEURS!" HE CRIED, JOWLS SWAYING. "IT WILL BE A GREAT HONOUR FOR ME TO WORK WITH THE REKNOWNED DETECTIVE OF ENGLAND!" WITH A TIP OF HIS CAP, HE WAS GONE OUT THE DOOR.

I ROSE TO ADDRESS HOLMES IN MY MOST AUTHORITATIVE DOCTOR'S VOICE. "I REALLY MUST ADVISE AGAINST YOUR GOING OUT OF DOORS IN YOUR CONDITION. GOOD HEAVENS, MAN, YOU CAN BARELY STAND UP. YOU ARE EXHAUSTED, AND FURTHER EXERTION WILL ONLY DO YOU GRIEVOUS HARM."

"I WILL BE FINE PRESENTLY," HOLMES REMARKED QUIETLY, TURNING AWAY FROM ME. "WATSON, GET MY CLOAK FROM THE FOYER, WILL YOU?"

AS I HAD LEARNED TOO WELL, WHEN HOLMES IS SET ON PURSUING A CASE, THERE IS LITTLE IN THIS MORTAL WORLD THAT CAN SWERVE HIM FROM HIS PATH. ALL I COULD DO WOULD BE TO ACCOMPANY HIM WHEREVER HE WENT, AND MAKE SURE HE WAS WELL DRESSED FOR THE COLD, RAINY WEATHER. WHEN I RETURNED TO THE BED-CHAMBER WITH OUR OVERCOATS, SCARVES AND HATS, I STOPPED, FROZEN IN MY TRACKS.



THERE SAT HOLMES IN THE CHAIR, HIS LEFT SHIRTSLEEVE ROLLED UP. IN HIS RIGHT HAND WAS A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.

"MY GOD, MAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!" I CRIED, UNABLE TO BELIEVE MY EYES.

"INJECTING A SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION OF COCAINE," MY FRIEND REMARKED MATTER-OF-FACTLY. HE DID NOT RAISE HIS EYES TO MINE, BUT CONCENTRATED ON THE NEEDLE IN HIS ARM.



"HOLMES, THAT IS NOTHING SHORT OF SLOW DEATH! MARK MY WORDS, ONE DAY THEY WILL MAKE THAT SUBSTANCE ILLEGAL IT OUGHT TO BE NOW, OTHER THAN FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES."

"THEN CONSIDER THIS A MEDICINAL PURPOSE, DOCTOR," HE SAID, HIS VOICE STEADIER. HE LOOKED AT ME THEN, HIS EYES DARK AND INTENSE, A TAUT NERVOUSNESS IN HIS MOVEMENTS. "THERE. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO STAND A FEW HOURS OUT IN THE COLD NOW. DON'T FORGET TO BRING OUR POCKET LANTERNS, WATSON. AND MY MAGNIFYING LENS!" HOLMES ROSE, SUDDENLY FULL OF ENERGY, AND RUSHED TO DON HIS OUTER GARMENTS.

I SANK ONTO THE BED TO STARE AT HIM IN SHOCK AND AMAZEMENT. I STILL COULD NOT BELIEVE WHAT I HAD SEEN. YET I

HAD TO MOVE QUICKLY TO KEEP UP WITH HOLMES, FOR HE WAS DASHING OUT THE DOOR AND DOWN TO THE WAITING CAB IN A

MATTER OF MOMENTS. I RAN AFTER HIM, AND HAD TO LEAP FOR THE CARRIAGE AS IT ROLLED AWAY UNDER HIS COMMAND.





AS WE RODE NORTH THROUGH ABBREVILLE TO THE RIVER, I CONFRONTED HIM. "HOLMES, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INJECTING COCAINE? I AM SURE I WOULD HAVE KNOWN IF YOU HAD BECOME ADDICTED TO IT WHILE WE SHARED THE ROOMS AT BAKER STREET."

"I AM NOT ADDICTED TO COCAINE," HE SAID WITH A SNEER. "I ONLY STARTED USING IT DURING THE LAST DAYS OF THE AFFAIR OF THE NETHERLANDS-SUMATRA COMPANY. AT FIRST IT WAS TO GIVE ME A BOOST SO THAT I COULD WORK LONGER HOURS, AT GREATER SPEED. BUT I MUST SAY THAT I THINK I SHALL FIND COCAINE AS GOOD A CURE FOR INTOLERABLE BOREDOM AS IT IS A HELP TO MY WORK!"

"HOLMES!" I SAID NOTHING MORE. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY.

SOON WE WERE AT THE SCENE OF THE MURDER. IT WAS DARK, COLD AND WET ON THE RIVERBANK. RAIN PELTED US CHILLINGLY. THE STARS WERE OBSCURED BY HEAVY, ROLLING STORMCLOUDS. TREES BENT LOW IN THE MOANING WIND. INSPECTOR CUISINEAU, A LARGE LANTERN IN HIS HAND, MET US AND LED US TO THE CORPSE.



A MORE TERRIBLY MAULED BODY I HAVE NEVER, IN ALL MY DAYS, SEEN. HOLMES IMMEDIATELY TOOK OUT HIS LENS AND BENT TO STUDY THE VICTIM. "WATSON, COME HERE! LOWER THAT LANTERN, INSPECTOR. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THESE WOUNDS, DOCTOR?"

"THEY ARE MADE BY TEETH OF A CANINE VARIETY, I WOULD SAY. SEE HERE, HOLMES, THE MARKS OF LONG INCISORS. AND ON THE HEAD AND TORSO ARE SCRATCHES FROM CLAWS."

"ANYTHING ELSE?"

"I MUST REMARK ON THE LACK OF BLOOD, HOLMES. THE FLESH IS TORN BADLY, BUT THERE IS AN ABSENCE OF THE COPIOUS BLEEDING ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH WOUNDS."



"PRECISELY! VERY GOOD, WATSON. WHAT WOULD THIS IMPLY? THERE HAS NOT BEEN ENOUGH RAIN TO WASH AWAY THE BLOOD THAT WOULD HAVE QUICKLY CONGEALED ABOUT THE WOUNDS."

ONE OF THE INSPECTOR'S CONSTABLES HAD APPEARED WITH SEVERAL MEN FROM THE TRAVELLING FAIR. ONE, WHO WORE A SHEEPSKIN HAT, BAGGY TROUSERS AND EMBROIDERED LINEN SHIRT, SAID THROUGH A RICH SLAVIC ACCENT, "THE VOURLALAK DRINKS THE BLOOD OF ITS VICTIM."

HOLMES WHIRLED TO STARE PIERCINGLY AT THE SPEAKER. "DOES IT INDEED? WE SHALL SEE. YOU ARE A COSSACK. FROM THE RUSSIAN STEPPE? I COMPLIMENT YOU ON YOUR ENGLISH."

THE COSSACK NODDED. "I TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY IN YOUR COUNTRY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. I AM MOROZ, LEADER OF THE SABRE DANCERS. MY PEOPLE ARE FROM THE KUBAN. WE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF UKRAINE, AND DO NOT CONSIDER OURSELVES RUSSIAN. ONE DAY WE WILL RULE OURSELVES, JUST AS ONE DAY MY FRIEND VUKASHIN THE SERB WILL BE FREE FROM THE YOKE OF THIS MAN'S EMPIRE." HE GESTURED TO THE TURK WHO GLOWERED ANGRILY AT THE CORPSE. "SERDAR THE TURK HEADS THE KNIFE-THROWERS' COMPANY. IT IS HIS NEPHEW WHO LIES THERE."

"MOST INTERESTING," HOLMES SAID QUIETLY. "DO EITHER OF THESE OTHER MEN SPEAK ENGLISH?"

MOROZ THE COSSACK SHOOK HIS HEAD. "SERDAR SPEAKS SOME FRENCH. I SUPPOSE YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE VOURLALAK, MISTER SHERLOCK HOLMES. PERHAPS THIS CREATURE DOES NOT EXIST IN YOUR COUNTRY. BUT THE SLAV PEOPLE HAVE KNOWN THE BEAST YOU CALL WEREWOLF TO BE AMONG THEM FOR HUNDREDS OF GENERATIONS. THIS MONSTER, TO A SERB OR A COSSACK, IS NO SUPERSTITION, BUT A LIVING NIGHTMARE. OFTEN THE VOURLALAK HIMSELF DOES NOT KNOW OF HIS SECOND IDENTITY. IT IS ONLY ON FEW NIGHTS OF THE FULL MOON

MOROZ



VUKASHIN



SERDAR



THAT HE BECOMES THE MURDERING BEAST."

"THEN HE MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE," HOLMES SAID, SMILING FAINTLY, "FOR THIS IS SURELY NO FULL MOON THIS NIGHT."

"IT COMES!" THE COSSACK WHISPERED "IT COMES!"

"WHAT DOES OUR TURKISH FRIEND THINK OF THIS TALK OF WEREWOLVES?" HOLMES ASKED, SCRUTINIZING EACH MAN IN TURN.

"AH, SERDAR IS NOT A SLAV. HE HAS NOT LIVED WITH THE DEMONS WE KNOW. HE THINKS THERE WAS THE HAND OF AN ORDINARY MAN IN THIS KILLING."

"AND YOU DO NOT?"

"MISTER HOLMES, I KNOW THE VOUDALAK EXISTS WHETHER IT WAS HE WHO MURDERED SERDAR'S NEPHEW, IT IS UP TO YOU TO FIND OUT. I RETURN TO MY WAGON NOW. GOOD NIGHT."

AS THE COSSACK DEPARTED, THE SERB AND TURK TURNED TO FOLLOW HIM. NEITHER HOLMES NOR I MISSED THE HOSTILE GLANCES THESE LATTER TWO EXCHANGED. HOLMES TURNED

TO THE INSPECTOR. "I BELIEVE YOU SAID THERE WERE FOOTPRINTS FROM THE KILLER AROUND HERE. LET US STUDY THEM BEFORE THE RAIN WASHES THEM AWAY." WITH HIS POCKET LANTERN IN ONE HAND AND LENS IN THE OTHER, HOLMES PROCEEDED TO PROWL ALONG THE MUDDY BANK.

CLOSE BY, WE FOUND WHAT WERE DEFINITELY THE PRINTS OF A WOLF'S HIND FEET. YET THERE WERE ONLY THOSE OF THE HIND FEET, PRESSED SO DEEPLY INTO THE MUD THAT IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN A TORRENT TO OBLITERATE THEM.

"THEY ARE SO PERFECTLY FORMED," HOLMES MUTTERED, HALF TO HIMSELF. "THE RAIN HAS NOT SMUDGED THEM. TELL ME, WATSON, DID YOU EVER KNOW A WOLF TO WALK SO CAREFULLY, WITH SUCH EVEN STEP? AND, NOW, OF A SUDDEN, WE HAVE PERFECTLY FORMED HUMAN FOOTPRINTS." WE FOLLOWED THESE UNTIL THEY LED OFF THE BANK AND INTO THE MEADOW. THERE THEY DISAP-

PEARED IN THE THICK GRASS. HOLMES RETURNED TO EXAMINE THE TRAIL ONCE MORE, TAKING NOTES IN A SMALL BOOK HE CARRIED FOR SUCH A PURPOSE.

AT LAST HE STRAIGHTENED HIMSELF AND SAID, "THAT IS ALL WE SHALL FIND OUT THIS NIGHT, WATSON. LET US RETURN TO THE HOTEL AND OUR WARM BEDS. I COULD DO WITH A BRANDY RIGHT NOW!"

INSPECTOR CUISINEAU SMILED AS HE REACHED INTO THE FOLDS OF HIS VOLUMINOUS CAPE. HE PULLED OUT A ROUND BOTTLE OF AMBER LIQUID. "THE BEST SERBIAN PLUM BRANDY," HE SAID. "I PURCHASED IT AT THE FAIR FROM ONE OF THE SERBS JUST THIS EVENING."

HOLMES TOOK A HEARTY SWIG, AND I FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE. IT WAS INDEED FINE BRANDY THEN THE INSPECTOR CALLED FOR OUR CARRIAGE. WITH GREAT RELIEF I SAW HOLMES OUT OF THE RAIN AND CHILL UPON REACHING OUR BEDS, WE BOTH FELL IMMEDIATELY ASLEEP.





I AWOKE LATE THE NEXT MORNING. HOLMES WAS FAST ASLEEP, AND REMAINED THAT WAY WELL PAST NOON. AT ONE O'CLOCK, I JUDGED IT BEST TO ROUSE HIM FOR A LIGHT DINNER. I WAS CERTAIN HE HAD NOT BEEN EATING PROPERLY OVER THE PAST WEEKS. HOWEVER, ONCE HE WAS FULLY AWAKE, I COULD NOT HOLD HIM BACK HE GULPED DOWN JUST ENOUGH FOOD TO QUELL THE GNAWING OF HIS BELLY, THEN REACHED FOR THE COCAINE BOTTLE AGAIN. I LEFT THE ROOM, UNABLE TO WATCH HIM INFUSE ANOTHER DOSE OF POISON ON HIS PERSON. WHEN I RETURNED, HE WAS DRESSED AND ABOUT TO LEAVE.

"HURRY, WATSON! THE TRAIL COOLS WITH EACH PASSING SECOND!" HE EXCLAIMED, GREATLY AGITATED. "WE WILL SPEND THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY AT THE FAIR, ROUND THE CARAVANS. WE MUST BE ON THE WATCH FOR A MAN WHO LIMPS ON HIS LEFT FOOT."

"A MAN WHO LIMPS? WHAT OF OUR TRAIN, HOLMES? IT MAY BE LEAVING TODAY."

"NONSENSE! DID YOU NOT NOTICE THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE TO THE BRIDGE, WHILE

WE WERE PROWLING ALONG THE RIVER LAST NIGHT? WE HAVE ANOTHER DAY AT LEAST, PERHAPS TWO. DON'T DAWDLE, WATSON!"

AS WE MADE OUR WAY TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, WE MET INSPECTOR CUISINEAU. WITH HIM WAS THE TURK KNIFE-THROWER, SERDAR. THE FRENCHMAN SAID, "THIS FELLOW INSISTS THAT I CHARGE VUKASHIN THE SERB WITH MURDER, MONSIEUR HOLMES. HE CLAIMS THE SERBS HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST HIS FAMILY."

"AND WHAT OF THE SERB WOMAN WHO WAS KILLED TWENTY KILOMETERS SOUTH OF HERE?" HOLMES ASKED, STUDYING THE FACE OF THE TURK. THE INSPECTOR TRANSLATED HOLMES' REMARK.

"HE SAYS THE SERBS ARE ALWAYS MURDERING EACH OTHER. HE CLAIMS THAT IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE OTTOMAN RULE OF SERBIA, THOSE PEOPLE WOULD BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS CONSTANTLY."

HOLMES REJOINED, "DOES THIS FELLOW VUKASHIN WALK WITH A LIMP? NO. THEN HE IS NOT YOUR MAN, INSPECTOR."

THE INSPECTOR'S EYES LIT UP AS THE TURK'S DARKENED. "YOU

HAVE A CLUE, THEN?"

"SEVERAL. I SHALL DISCUSS THEM WITH YOU ANOTHER TIME. GOOD DAY, INSPECTOR, MONSIEUR SERDAR. WATSON, HURRY ALONG."

"HOLMES," I SAID WHEN WE WERE OUT OF HEARING RANGE OF THE TURK AND THE INSPECTOR, "YOU THINK OUR MURDERER IS A MAN, THEN?"

"I HAD NO DOUBT OF IT FROM THE MOMENT I SAW THE CORPSE. YOU CONFIRMED WHAT I SUSPECTED, WATSON. I AM SURE YOU CAN DEDUCE WHY WE SEARCH FOR A MAN WITH A LIMP."

I THOUGHT BACK ON ALL WE HAD SEEN. "THE LEFT FOOT-PRINT WAS DEEPER THAN THE RIGHT."

"EXCELLENT. YET THE WOLFPRINTS WERE OF AN EVEN DEPTH, AND SO PERFECTLY FORMED. CURIOUS. NO WILD BEAST EVER TROD SO CAREFULLY ON A MUDDY BANK."

OF COURSE! IT MUST BE A MAN DISGUISED HIS TRAIL AS THAT OF A WEREWOLF. THEN HOW DID THE CORPSE GET SO TORN?"

"THERE IS THE TRAVELLING FAIR, WATSON. WATCH FOR OUR MAN. AND FOR A PACK OF DOGS!"





THE DAY WAS GREY AND DAMP, WITH A MIST AS GOOD AS ANY LONDON COULD BREW UP. HOLMES AND I SEPARATED, MUCH TO MY DISMAY, FOR MY FRENCH WAS FAR POORER THAN HIS. AS WELL, I WAS STILL VERY CONCERNED FOR HIS HEALTH. YET, AS USUAL, I SUBMITTED TO HIS STRONGER WILL, POSING AS AN ENTHRALLED TOURIST. I WANDERED ABOUT THE WAGONS OF THE TURKS. DESPITE THE CHILL AND DAMPNESS OF THE DAY, SEVERAL MEN WERE OUT PERFORMING THEIR KNIFE-THROWING ACT, WITH A DARK, SCANTILY CLAD MAID TRUSTING IN THEIR UNFAILING AIM. AS A CROWD GREW ABOUT THE PERFORMERS, I SLID QUIETLY IN BETWEEN THE CLUSTERED WAGONS. I STOPPED BESIDE ONE WHEREIN A HEATED CONVERSATION WAS TAKING PLACE. MUCH OF THE TALKING WAS IN THE TURKI LANGUAGE, WHICH I UNDERSTOOD NOT A WHIT, BUT THERE WERE SNIPPETS OF CONVERSATION IN FRENCH. IT SEEMED THAT SOME FRENCH ALLY OF THE TURKS WAS PROVIDING THEM WITH INFORMATION, WHICH SERVED TO HEAT THE TEMPER OF THE ALREADY EXCITED MEN. I COULD DISCERN

NEITHER THE DETAILS NOR THE DRIFT OF THE TALK. HOWEVER, THREE TIMES I HEARD THE WORD *YOURDALAK* SPOKEN.

SOMEONE WITHIN RAISED HIS VOICE IN ANGER AND LEFT FROM THE WAGON. I SHRANK BACK UNDER A NEIGHBOURING WAGON, BARELY AVOIDING BEING SEEN BY THE FELLOW. I WATCHED AS HE PAUSED TO ADJUST HIS FEZ AND CHECK THE SHARPNESS OF THE NUMEROUS KNIVES AT HIS BELT. THEN HE STALKED OFF AT AN UNEVEN GAIT.

THIS, I CONCLUDED, MUST BE OUR MURDERER, FOR HIS LIMP WAS OBVIOUS, AND ON THE LEFT FOOT. CAUTIOUSLY I FOLLOWED HIM. FROM A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF HIS FACE, I KNEW HE WAS UP TO NO GOOD. HE STRODE THROUGH THE CROWD ROUND THE PERFORMERS, SHOVING THEM FROM HIS PATH. A MOMENT LATER, TWO MORE TURKS LEFT OUT OF THE WAGON, AND CHARGED AFTER HIM. BOTH WERE GRIMFACED BUT SILENT. THEY DID NOT SEEK TO HINDER THE LIMPING MAN, BUT STRODE AT A PACE WITH HIM. I LOST MYSELF IN THE CROWD UNTIL THEY HAD PASSED ME BY.

I SEARCHED FOR HOLMES WITH FEVERED HASTE, AND FOUND HIM WEAVING HIS WAY

THROUGH A THRONG GATHERED TO WATCH THE COSSACK DANCERS. "HOLMES, THIS WAY!" I CALLED, TRYING TO KEEP MY VOICE LOW. "I'VE SPOTTED THE MURDERER, AND HE'S OFF TO MAKE TROUBLE!"

MY FRIEND GRIPPED MY ARM FIRMLY, PULLING ME TO AN ABRUPT HALT. "WATSON, KINDLY CONTAIN YOURSELF. HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED THESE COSSACKS PERFORM THEIR SABRE DANCE? IT IS BREATHTAKING."

"HOLMES, OUR MAN ESCAPES!" I GASPED.

"WATCH THE SABRE DANCE, WATSON," HE COMMANDED, FIXING ME WITH A COLD STARE. SHAKING MY HEAD, I TURNED AWAY FROM THE LIMPING TURK.

I LOOKED AT THE WHIRLING DANCERS, AND GASPED ONCE MORE. THERE WERE FIVE OF THEM, EACH TWIRLING A SWORD AT BLURRING SPEED. THE FLASHING BLADES SOARED WITHIN INCHES OF THE COSSACK'S LEADING FEET. A DOZEN TIMES IN AS MANY MOMENTS, I THOUGHT A MAN WOULD SURELY LOSE HIS FOOT. IT NEVER HAPPENED.

"WHY, HOLMES, THESE MEN MUST BE FEARLESS!" I WHISPERED.

"ALMOST, WATSON. YET A SINGLE WORD WILL MAKE ANY ONE OF THEM TREMBLE WITH FEAR. YOU CAN GUESS WHAT THAT WORD IS, MY FRIEND. I WOULD NOT SPEAK IT WHILE THEY DANCE." WE WATCHED THE COSSACKS FOR SEVERAL MINUTES MORE, THEN HOLMES WAS MOVING OUT OF THE CROWD, TUGGING AT MY ARM. WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER, HE SAID, "SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE FOUND OUR MURDERER, WATSON. WHAT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS YOUR CLAIM?"

HE WAS SMILING, AND I HAD THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION HE WAS PLAYING WITH ME. I REPLIED GRUFFLY, "I FOUND A TURK WITH A LIMP. HE LEFT HIS WAGON WEARING THE MOST MURDEROUS LOOK I HAVE EVER SEEN."

HOLMES SHOOK HIS HEAD. "AND FOR THESE REASONS YOU WOULD SEND HIM TO THE GUILLOTINE? WATSON! I WILL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT IN MY PAST QUARTER HOUR I HAVE SPOTTED NOT ONE, BUT THREE MEN WHO LIMP. YOUR TURK, A SERB AND A COSSACK. SHALL WE SEND THEM ALL TO THE CHOPPING MACHINE? I HOPE NOT. YET LET US FOLLOW YOUR MAN, FOR HE IS ARMED AND ANGRY."

"QUITE. BUT HOLMES . . ."
"WATSON, PLEASE DON'T BORE ME BY ASKING HOPE. I KNOW THE TURK IS ARMED. KNIVES ARE HIS BUSINESS." HOLMES WAS OFF LIKE A HOUND ON THE HUNT, AND FOR THE MOMENT I FORGOT HOW ILL HE ACTUALLY WAS. WE HAD NO DIFFICULTY FINDING OUR TURK, FOR AFTER A CERTAIN DISTANCE WE HAD MERELY TO FOLLOW THE SOUNDS OF HIS SHOUTING. WE FOUND HIM, A KNIFE GRIPPED TIGHTLY IN ONE HAND, STANDING OUTSIDE ONE OF THE WAGONS BELONGING TO THE SERBIAN ACROBATS. ON THE SIDE OF THE WAGON WAS PAINTED A PICTURE OF TWO MEN LEAPING HIGH IN THE AIR. A TURKISH KNIFE BLADE PROTRUDED FROM ONE OF THOSE PAINTED FIGURES.

FORTUNATELY THE TURK AND HIS TWO FELLOWS WERE AT PRESENT HURLING ONLY INSULTS AT THE MOB OF SERBS POURING OUT OF THE WAGON. HIS VOICE ROARED BACK AND FORTH, RISING IN PITCH AND VOLUME. HOLMES AND I STOOD SILENTLY BY, POWERLESS TO PREVENT THE BRAWL THAT WOULD ENSUE. HOLMES SPOTTED THE COSSACK MOROZ ARRIVING ON THE SCENE, AND ASKED OF HIM, "WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE ESSENCE OF THIS ARGUMENT?"

"MISTER HOLMES, SURELY YOU HAVE DEDUCED THAT THIS CONCERNS THE MURDERS THAT HAVE PLAGUED OUR CARAVAN THE PAST TWO MONTHS."

"TWO MONTHS, YOU SAY? WAS INSPECTOR CUISINEAU INCORRECT WHEN HE TOLD ME THE MURDER OF THE SERB WOMAN OCCURRED ONE MONTH AGO?"

"NO. WHAT THE INSPECTOR DID NOT KNOW WHAT THAT ONE MONTH BEFORE THE DEATH OF

THE WOMAN, A SERB MAN WAS SLAIN."

"THE SAME PATTERN?"
THE COSSACK SHOOK HIS HEAD. "IT WAS NOT A VOIR-DALAK, BUT A MAN'S KNIFE THAT KILLED THIS SERB. I SEE THAT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE VOIR-DALAK, MISTER HOLMES."

HOLMES SMILED. "YOU ARE A PERCEPTIVE MAN, MOROZ. YET I PREFER TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ABOUT SUCH THINGS. HOWEVER . . ."
SUDDENLY THE COSSACK JUMPED HIGH, HIS SABRE FLASHING OVER THE HEADS OF THE FOLK WHO HAD GATHERED ROUND US. THE DULL SIDE OF HIS BLADE CAME DOWN ON THE WRIST OF THE ENRAGED TURK, KNOCKING THE KNIFE FROM EXTENDED FINGERS. THE INTENDED THROW FOILED, EVERYONE YELLED AT ONCE. THERE FOLLOWED THE MOST VICIOUS BRAWL BETWEEN THE TURKS AND SERBS, BUT THANKFULLY ONLY FISTS WERE USED SEVERAL OF MOROZ'S COSSACK

COMPANIONS HAD ARRIVED TO ENSURE THAT NO BLADES BUT THEIR OWN WOULD BE DRAWN. THEIR SABRES, IRONICALLY, PREVENTED BLOOD FROM BEING SPILLED.

SOON INSPECTOR CUISINEAU AND HIS CONSTABLES ARRIVED TO PUT AN END TO THE BRAWL. HOLMES, MOROZ AND I MOVED OFF AS THE THROING DISPersed.

"TELL ME, MOROZ," HOLMES ASKED, "AFTER THE SERB MAN WAS KILLED, DID ANY NEW MEMBERS JOIN THE FAIR?"

"WHY, YES! THE BROTHER OF THE SLAIN MAN ARRIVED TO TAKE HIS PLACE IN THE ACROBATIC TROUP."

"IS HE THE SERB WITH THE LIMP?"
"NO. WHY DO YOU ASK ABOUT A MAN WITH A LIMP?"
"THERE ARE FROM MY OBSERVATIONS, THREE MEN IN THIS COMPANY WHO LIMP. ONE IS THE TURK WHO STARTED THIS BRAWL."

"YES. ANOTHER IS DMITRI, ONE OF MY COSSACKS. THREE YEARS AGO, THE FIRST TIME HE AT-

TEMPTED THE SABRE DANCE. HE . . . MADE A MISTAKE. THE THIRD IS A SERB CALLED ZARKO, WHO BROKE HIS LEG LAST YEAR IN A FALL. HE HELPS WITH THE ACROBATS' EQUIPMENT NOW."

"THANK YOU VERY MUCH," HOLMES SAID QUICKLY. HE MOTIONED TO ME, SAYING IN A LOUDER VOICE, "WATSON I AM FEELING QUITE ILL, AND MUST RETIRE FOR A SOUND NIGHT'S SLEEP." WE LEFT TO RETURN TO OUR HOTEL AS WE WALKED BACK TO TOWN. I SAW THAT HOLMES WAS INDEED EXHAUSTED. HE SLUMPED AGAINST ME MORE HEAVILY WITH EACH STEP. YET I KNOW BY THE TWINKLING IN HIS EYE THAT HE WAS ONTO SOMETHING.

"HOLMES, WHY DID YOU SPEAK SO LOUDLY BACK THERE? IT WAS AS THOUGH YOU WANTED ALL ABOUT US TO HEAR YOUR WORDS."

"PRECISELY. ONE OF THOSE THREE MEN MOROZ MENTIONED IS OUR KILNER, AND THE WORD THAT I SHALL BE IN BED ALL

NIGHT WILL SURELY GET BACK TO HIM."

"AND YOU INTEND THE OP-POSITIVE?"
"QUITE GOOD, WATSON. NOW GET ME TO BED SO THAT I DO NOT EMBARRASS US BOTH BY COLLAPSING HERE ON THE STREET."

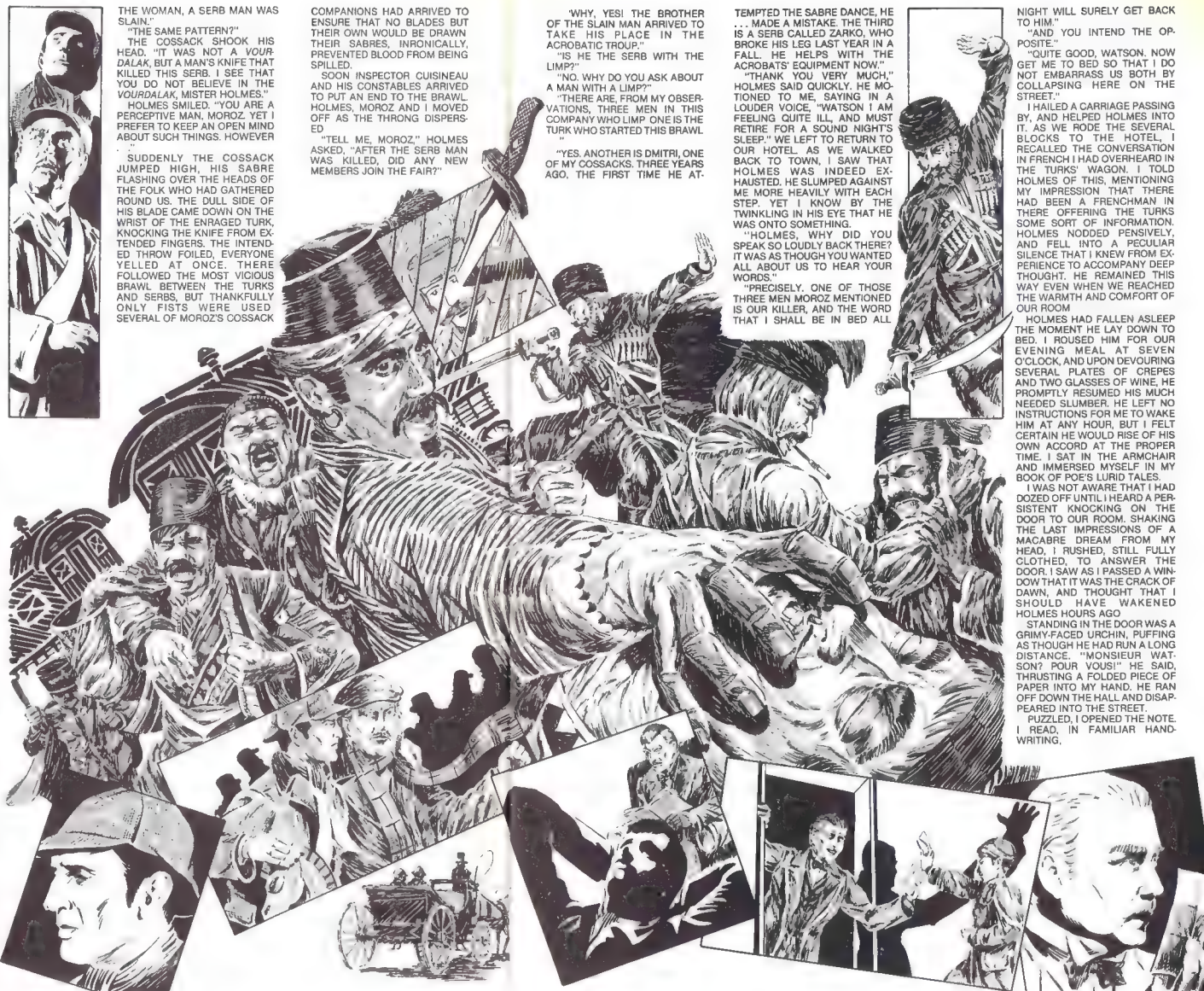
I HAILED A CARRIAGE PASSING BY, AND HELPED HOLMES INTO IT. AS WE RODE THE SEVERAL BLOCKS TO THE HOTEL, I RECALLED THE CONVERSATION IN FRENCH I HAD OVERHEARD IN THE TURKISH WAGON. I TOLD HOLMES OF THIS, MENTIONING MY IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAD BEEN A FRENCHMAN IN THERE, OFFERING THE TURKS SOME SORT OF INFORMATION. HOLMES NODDED PENSIVELY, AND FELL INTO A PECULIAR SILENCE THAT KNEW I KNEW OF HIS THOUGHTS. HE REMAINED THIS WAY EVEN WHEN WE REACHED THE WARMTH AND COMFORT OF OUR ROOM.

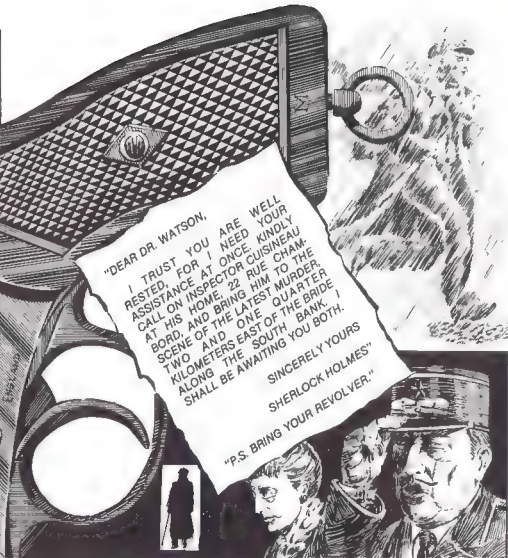
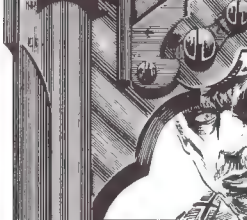
HOLMES HAD FALLEN ASLEEP THE MOMENT HE LAY DOWN TO BED. I ROUSED HIM FOR OUR EVENING MEAL. AT SEVEN O'CLOCK, AND UPON DEVOURING SEVERAL PLATES OF CREPES AND TWO GLASSES OF WINE, HE PROMPTLY RESUMED HIS MUCH NEEDED SLEEP. HE LEFT NO INSTRUCTIONS FOR ME TO WAKE HIM AT ANY HOUR, BUT I FELT CERTAIN HE WOULD RISE OF HIS OWN ACCORD AT THE PROPER TIME. I SAT IN THE ARMCHAIR AND IMMERSSED MYSELF IN MY BOOK OF POE'S LURID TALES.

I WAS NOT AWARE THAT I HAD DOZED OFF UNTIL I HEARD A PERSISTENT KNOCKING ON THE DOOR TO OUR ROOM. SHAKING THE LAST IMPRESSION OF A MACABRE DREAM FROM MY HEAD, I RUSHED, STILL FULLY CLOTHED, TO ANSWER THE DOOR. I SAW AS I PASSED A WINDOW THAT IT WAS THE CRACK OF DAWN, AND THOUGHT THAT I SHOULD HAVE AWAKENED HOLMES HOURS AGO.

STANDING IN THE DOOR WAS A GRIMY-FACED URCHIN, PUFFING AS THOUGH HE HAD RUN A LONG DISTANCE. "MORSEAU! WATSON? POUR VOUS!" HE SAID, THRUSTING A FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER INTO MY HAND. HE RAN OFF DOWN THE HALL AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE STREET.

PUZZLED, I OPENED THE NOTE. I READ, IN FAMILIAR HAND-WRITING,





"DEAR DR. WATSON,
I TRUST YOU ARE WELL
RESTED, FOR I NEED YOUR
ASSISTANCE AT ONCE. KINDLY
CALL ON INSPECTOR CUISINEAU
AT HIS HOME, 22 RUE CHAM-
BORD, AND BRING HIM TO THE
SCENE OF THE LATEST MURDER.
TWO AND ONE QUARTER
KILOMETERS EAST OF THE BRIDGE
ALONG THE SOUTH BANK. I
SHALL BE AWAITING YOU BOTH.

SINCERELY YOURS
SHERLOCK HOLMES"

"P.S. BRING YOUR REVOLVER."

I RUSHED TO THE BED WHERE HOLMES HAD LAIN, TO FIND IT EMPTY. ON A SMALL TABLE NEARBY I SAW THE COCAINE BOTTLE AND AN EMPTY HYPODERMIC SYRINGE. HOW LONG AGO HAD HOLMES LEFT? I KNEW MY FRIEND WAS CAPABLE OF THE GREATEST STEALTH, SO I WAS NOT SURPRISED THAT HE COULD GET PAST ME WITHOUT WAKENING ME. HOWEVER, I WAS SOMEWHAT ANNOYED. HOW COULD I LOOK AFTER MY PATIENT WHEN HE INSISTED ON RUNNING OFF WITHOUT ME? BUT

THAT WAS SHERLOCK HOLMES. I THREW ON MY COAT AND HAT IN HASTE, AND RAN INTO THE STREET. I FOUND THE RUE CHAMBORD WITH LITTLE TROUBLE, FOR ARBREVILLE IS A SMALL TOWN. THE INSPECTOR WAS STILL ASLEEP, AND HIS WIFE WAS RELUCTANT TO RAISE HIM. BUT WHEN I SPOKE THE WORDS *MEURDRE* AND *VOURDALAK*, HE WAS DRESSED WITH ME IN MOMENTS. TOGETHER WE TOOK A CARRIAGE TO THE BRIDGE AND WALKED SWIFTLY ALONG THE BANK.



IT WAS COLD. THE LIGHT RAIN WAS MIXED WITH SLEET, AND LASHED US MERCILESSLY AS THE WIND PICKED UP. THE FIELDS FLANKING THE RIVER WERE DARK AND SOAKING WET. I FELT CHILLED BY MORE THAN THE WEATHER, HOWEVER. FOR SOME REASON, THE IDEA OF A WEREWOLF PROWLING THE COUNTRYSIDE SEEMED VERY REAL TO ME AS I WALKED TOWARDS THE WAITING, BUTCHERED BODY. AT THE SCENE, THREE LOCAL MEN STOOD STARING DUMBLY AT THE CORPSE. TWO WERE YOUNG LABOURERS FOR THE RAILWAY WHO HAD APPARENTLY STOPPED HERE ON THEIR WAY TO WORK ON THE BRIDGE. THE OTHER WAS A STOOPED, AGED PEASANT WHO PUFFED THROUGH THICK, GREY WHISKERS ON A LONG-STEMMED PIPE. HIS CRIMSON CAP WAS TILTED DOWN OVER HIS RIGHT EYE, THE COLLAR OF HIS WOOL CAPE TURNED UP ROUND HIS CHEEKS.

THE VICTIM WAS, AS THE INSPECTOR AND I HAD FEARED, ONCE AGAIN A TURK. HIS TORSO AND BOTH LEGS WERE BADLY TORN. I BENT CLOSE TO EXAMINE THE WOUNDS. I NOTED THAT, AGAIN, THERE WAS AN UNUSUAL LACK OF BLOOD ROUND THE TORN FLESH. THE WOUNDS WERE WITHOUT DOUBT CAUSED BY TEARING FANGS. THEN I NOTICED THE NECK. THERE WAS A LOT OF CONGEALED BLOOD AROUND ONE LONG, STRAIGHT CUT — CLEAN ALONG ITS EDGES WHERE THE OTHERS WERE RAGGED.

"WHERE THE DEVIL IS HOLMES?" I WONDERED ALOUD, SUDDENLY CONCERNED LEST HE HAD COME TO SOME HARM. I



TURNED TO THE PEASANT. "SAY, OLD FELLOW — DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH? HAVE YOU SEEN A MAN HEREABOUTS WEARING A TWEED CLOAK AND DEER-STALKER CAP?"

THE FARMER MERELY CONTINUED TO PUFF ON HIS PIPE. "I SAY, DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?" I SHOUTED, GROWING IMPATIENT.

"I DARESAY I SPEAK IT AS WELL AS YOURSELF — AND A SIGHT MORE POLITELY!"

I STARTED, THEN STARED, THEN BEGAN TO LAUGH. "HOLMES! WHY, I'D NEVER HAVE RECOGNIZED YOU IF YOU HADN'T SPOKEN! BUT WHAT ARE DOING IN THAT GETTUP?"

HOLMES SHOVED THE FRENCHMAN'S CAP BACK ON HIS HEAD AND PUT OUT THE PIPE. "I USED THIS PERSONA SEVERAL TIMES ON MY PREVIOUS CASE. IT HAS PROVED MOST USEFUL AGAIN. I MUST SAY, WATSON, IT IS EXCEEDINGLY CURIOUS HOW PARTICULAR OUR WEREWOLF IS REGARDING HIS VICTIMS. HERE I



HAVE WANDERED ALONG THE RIVER ALL NIGHT, LOOKING EVERY INCH LIKE A DEFENSELESS OLD FARMER, AND NEVER HEARD THE BEAST STALKING. YET A BIG, BRAWNY MAN, ARMED WITH SEVERAL KNIVES, IS CHOSEN AS THE PREY. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THIS?"

"I WOULD SAY, HOLMES, THAT THIS VICTIM WAS DEAD BEFORE HE WAS CHEWED UP." I SMILED; I WAS PLEASED WITH MYSELF, AND SO WAS HOLMES.

"WATSON, YOU HAVE A KEENER MIND THAN YOU OFTEN LET ON. HOW DO YOU ARRIVE AT THIS CONCLUSION?"

"THIS MAN'S THROAT WAS CUT BY A KNIFE. WHEN THE WOLF — OR WHATEVER ANIMAL — CHEWED HIM UP, THERE WAS LITTLE BLOOD LEFT TO SEEP OUT THE NEW WOUNDS. YOU HAVE ALREADY CHECKED THE PRINTS AROUND THE CORPSE, I EXPECT."

"OF COURSE. MOMENTS AFTER I FOUND THE BODY IT WAS NOT MORE THAN TWO HOURS AGO. HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THAT, I HEARD A PACK OF DOGS BARKING."

"WHAT IS THIS?" ASKED THE INSPECTOR, HIS EYES HAD BEEN WIDENING WITH EACH REVELATION.

"ALL WILL BE REVEALED IN GOOD TIME, INSPECTOR," HOLMES SAID. "WE NEED SEVERAL MORE HOURS TO OUR OWN DEVICES. HAVE YOUR CONSTABLES POSTED ROUND THE WAGONS OF THE FAIR. MY COLLEAGUE AND I WILL RETURN SHORTLY WITH THE DATA NEEDED TO CLOSE THIS CASE. COME, WATSON. NOW, IF ONLY I CAN FIND THE HAYSTACK WHERE I HID MY OTHER CLOTHES..."



"OPPORTUNITY AND MOTIVE, WATSON — THESE ARE THE ELEMENTS WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON WHEN ONLY CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IS AVAILABLE. FIRST OFF, WE MUST RULE OUT THE COSSACK DMITRI. HIS LIMP, I FOUND ON CLOSE OBSERVATION, IS ON THE RIGHT FOOT. MOREOVER, I SPOKE A SHORT TIME AGO WITH MOROZ, WHO SWORE ON HIS ORTHODOX BIBLE THAT THE MAN WAS UP ALL NIGHT WITH A BAD COUGH.



"OPPORTUNITY, THEN: SO FAR AS WE KNOW, THE LIMPING TURK AND THE LIMPING SERB COULD HAVE SLIPPED OUT OF THEIR WAGONS IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT AND COMMITTED THE CRIME. BOTH LIMP ON THE LEFT FOOT.

"WHAT OF MOTIVE? WHY WOULD THE TURK SLAY A MAN WHO HAD RECENTLY FOUGHT AT HIS SIDE, AS THE DECEASED HAD DONE ONLY THE PREVIOUS EVENING?



AHBDUL



DMITRI



ZARKO

"YET THERE IS GREAT ENMITY BETWEEN THE SERBS AND THE TURKS. FURTHERMORE, ACTING UPON YOUR DISCOVERIES YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, I SPENT THE FIRST HOURS OF LAST NIGHT LOITERING ROUND THE TURKS' WAGONS IN MY DISGUISE. I WAS ABLE TO OVERHEAR A LENGTHY CONVERSATION. MUCH OF IT, NATURALLY, WAS IN TURKI AND ELUDED ME, YET THERE WAS IN ONE

WAGON A FELLOW WHO SPOKE ONLY FRENCH. I HAD TO CRAWL UNDER THE WAGON, THEN UP ONTO THE REAR AXLE TO AVOID DISCOVERY. HOWEVER, I COULD EAVESDROP EXCELLENTLY FROM THIS POSITION.

"THIS FRENCHMAN — UNDOUBTEDLY THE SAME FELLOW YOU HEARD LAST AFTERNOON, WATSON — IS A SPY IN THE EMPLOY OF THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, SEVERAL OF

THE TURKS TRAVELLING WITH THIS FAIR ARE SECRET AGENTS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. IT WAS, I LEARNED LAST NIGHT, ONE OF THESE AGENTS WHO MURDERED THE SERBIAN MAN TWO MONTHS AGO. HE WAS A MEMBER OF A SERBIAN NATIONALIST GROUP PLOTTING SOME SORT OF ASSASSINATION. THE TURKS NIPPED THE PLOT IN THE BUDDING, SO TO SPEAK."



WE HAD COME TO A DISHEVELLED HAYSTACK, ONE OF SEVERAL THAT HAD APPARENTLY BEEN LEFT STANDING THROUGH THE WINTER. HOLMES STOPPED HERE TO RETRIEVE A PACKAGE. WHILE HE REMOVED HIS PEASANT'S GARB AND DONNED HIS OWN CLOTHING, HE CONTINUED TO SPEAK. "I QUICKLY REALIZED OUR KILLER'S MOTIVE, WATSON. A SERB, WHO HAD BEEN IN LEAGUE WITH THE WOULD-BE ASSASSIN, MUST HAVE COME TO SUSPECT THE TURKS OF DOING AWAY WITH HIS FRIEND. HE DECIDED TO TAKE REVENGE. FOR REASONS WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT PRESENTLY, HE CHOSE TO MAKE THE MURDERS OF THE TURKS LOOK LIKE THE WORK OF THE VOURDALAK."

"HOLMES, THIS MAY ALL BE TRUE. HOWEVER, THERE IS NOT A SHRED OF PROOF TO PRESENT TO THE INSPECTOR."

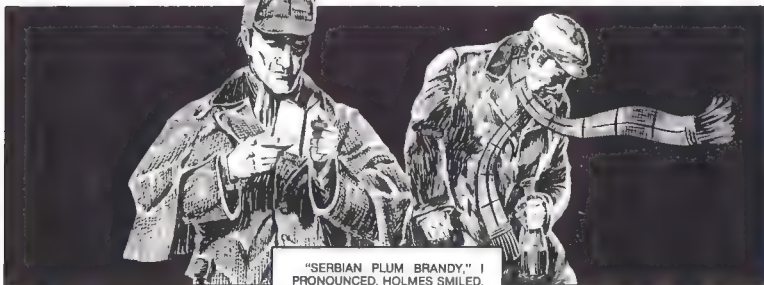
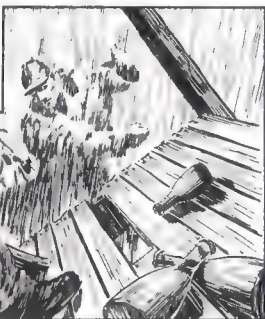




"THEN LET US BE OFF TO OBTAIN SAID PROOF, WATSON!" WE HURRIED AWAY TO THE ONLY LOGICAL DESTINATION. HOLMES, I KNEW, WAS ONCE MORE ON THE VERGE OF EXHAUSTION. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE THRILL OF THE CHASE, HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY COLLAPSE. I STUCK CLOSE BY HIM.



THE WAGON OF ZARKO THE SERB STOOD OFF FROM THE OTHERS, AND WAS DESERTED WHEN HOLMES AND I ARRIVED THERE. IT WAS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, CLOSE BY A FARM WHERE WE COULD HEAR A PACK OF DOGS HOWLING FORLORNLY. WE APPROACHED THE FARM WITH STEALTH, BUT SOON DISCOVERED THERE WAS LITTLE NEED TO SKULK ABOUT. THE FARMER WAS SNORING LOUDLY ON HIS PORCH, WITH SEVERAL EMPTY BOTTLES LYING BESIDE HIS CHAIR. I EXAMINED ONE.



"SERBIAN PLUM BRANDY," I PRONOUNCED. HOLMES SMILED.

WE MOVED TO THE PEN WHERE THE HUNTING HOUNDS WERE KEPT. THEY WERE A MOST LEAN AND WRETCHED PACK, UNDER-FOED AND SNAPPISH. DEFTLY HOLMES PLUCKED A SHRED OF CLOTH FROM A SHARP CORNER OF THE GATE.



"SHALL WE WAGER ON WHETHER THIS FABRIC MATCHES THE TROUSERS OF THE SLAIN TURK?" HE ASKED.



"NOT A FARTHING!" I SAID. WE WENT BACK TO ZARKO'S WAGON. I STOOD WATCH WHILE HOLMES CRAWLED INSIDE. MOMENTS LATER, HE REAPPEARED WITH A SLENDER BUNDLE IN HIS ARMS. I TOOK IT FROM HIM AND PROCEEDED TO TEAR OFF THE WRAPPINGS. INSIDE WERE THE RIGID, WELL-PRESERVED HIND LEGS OF A WOLF. "THE PROOF WE NEEDED, WATSON!" HOLMES SAID TRIUMPHANTLY. "OFF TO THE INSPECTOR WITH THESE!"

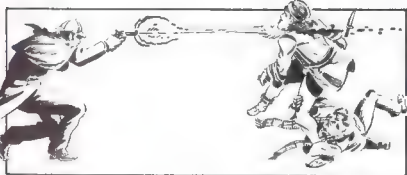


I STRETCHED TO GATHER THEM IN MY ARMS. I FEEL FORWARD AS A HEAVY OBJECT THUDDU AGAINST MY SKULL. MY EYES BLURRED. I SAW HOLMES LEAP TO ONE SIDE. A LARGE FIGURE LUNGED PAST ME. HOLMES REACHED INTO HIS POCKET. AS THE FIGURE EX-



TENDED HIS ARM TO LET FLY A KNIFE, I GRASPED HIS ANKLE AND PULLED. HOLMES FIRED HIS PISTOL AT THE SAME INSTANT.

THE SERB FELL INCHES FROM WHERE I LAY. HOLMES BENT TO AID ME. "WATSON, ARE YOU HURT?"



"SEE HERE, HOLMES, I AM THE DOCTOR," I MUMBLED, RISING GROGGILY. "I AM SUPPOSED TO BE MINISTERING TO YOU — IF ONLY YOU'D LET ME!"

HOLMES LAUGHED. "WELL, THAT SHOT HAS SUMMONED INSPECTOR CUISINEAU, I SEE." WE WAITED FOR THE PLUMP FRENCHMAN TO REACH US, THEN PRESENTED HIM WITH HIS CULPRIT. "I DID NOT SHOOT TO KILL, SO THE SCOUNDREL SHOULD LIVE TO FACE THE GUILLOTINE," HOLMES SAID SOMBERLY. "THAT PARCEL ON THE GROUND SHOULD DO THE JOB OF ESTABLISHING HIS GUILT, INSPECTOR.

"NOW, IF YOU WILL EXCUSE US, MY COLLEAGUE AND I REQUIRE A GOOD DAY'S REST BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE ON THE MORROW. ADIEU."

AS WE PREPARED OURSELVES FOR SLEEP THAT EVENING, HOLMES GLANCED OUT THE WINDOW OF OUR ROOM. THE WEATHER HAD BEGUN TO CLEAR, THE CLOUDS DISPERSING WITH A GOOD WIND. "A FULL MOON TONIGHT, WATSON," HE SAID THOUGHTFULLY. "IS THIS NOT WHEN THE VOURLALAK PROWL?"

"SO THE SERBS AND COSSACKS SAY." I REPLIED SLEEPILY, "THOUGHT OUR BEAST WON'T BE PROWLING ANYWHERE OTHER THAN A JAIL CELL ON THIS NIGHT."

HOLMES SAID NOTHING, BUT CONTINUED TO STARE OUT THE WINDOW FOR SEVERAL MINUTES.

AS WE WERE ABOUT TO BOARD THE CARRIAGE THAT WOULD TAKE US TO THE WAITING TRAIN, HOLMES CRANED HIS NECK ROUND TO GLANCE DOWN THE STREET. "HOLD BACK, DRIVER!" HE CALLED OUT IN FRENCH. TO ME HE SAID, "HERE COMES INSPECTOR CUISINEAU."

"WHAT, AGAIN?" I CRIED. "SURELY OUR SOLVING ONE CASE FOR HIM IS ENOUGH TO ASK!"

"MONSIEUR HOLMES! I AM SO RELIEVED THAT I CAUGHT YOU BEFORE YOU LEFT!" HE SAID, HUFFING FROM HIS RUN. "THERE HAS BEEN ANOTHER MURDER! THE ARBBREVILLE BEAST HAS STRUCK AGAIN!"

I SNORTED. HOLMES, TO MY SURPRISE, DID NOT. HE CALLED TO THE DRIVER THAT HE SHOULD TAKE US WHERE THE INSPECTOR DIRECTED.

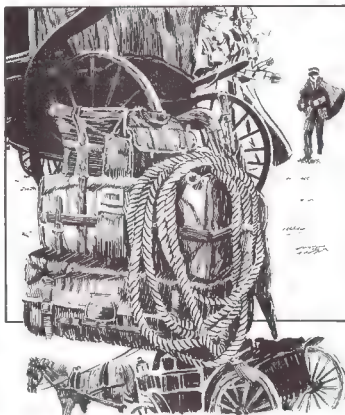
"HOLMES, WE WILL MISS OUR TRAIN!" I SAID ANGRILY. "YOU ARE FAR TOO ILL TO GO RUNNING OFF ON A WILD CHASE YET ANOTHER TIME. I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO LET YOU GO. IF NECESSARY, I SHALL ADMINISTER A SEDATIVE..."

"SUCH CONCERN IS TOUCHING, WATSON, BUT THE HEAVY HAND IS NOT NECESSARY. WE HAVE ONE HOUR AND TWENTY MINUTES BEFORE OUR TRAIN DEPARTS. THAT LEAVES US ENOUGH TIME TO VIEW THE CORPSE AND SCENE OF THE CRIME. ON, DRIVER! HURRY IN, INSPECTOR!"

RATHER THAN PROCEEDING TO THE RIVERBANK, THE INSPECTOR LED US TO A SECLUDED SPOT BESIDE A SMALL WOOD IT WAS ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS FROM WHERE THE TRAVELLING FAIR WAS CAMPED. HE TOLD US. AS WE GOT OUT OF THE CARRIAGE, WE SAW THAT THE LATEST VICTIM WAS A YOUNG WOMAN. INCREDIBLY, HER BODY WAS MORE BADLY TORN THAN THE PREVIOUS VICTIMS.

THE INSPECTOR LOOKED FROM THE CORPSE TO HOLMES. HE SAID, "IT SEEMS THAT YOU HAD ME ARREST THE WRONG MAN, MONSIEUR. MON DIEU! THIS IS SUCH A DIFFICULT CASE! EVEN THE GREAT DETECTIVE OF ENGLAND CAN MAKE A MISTAKE IN SUCH AN AFFAIR."

"NOT AT ALL!" HOLMES SNAPPED. "YOU HAVE CLEARLY NOT TAKEN THE TIME TO STUDY THE



WEALTH OF CLUES THAT DISTINGUISH THIS KILLING FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES.

"FIRST, THE VICTIM IS A GYPSY GIRL, NOT A TURK.

"SECOND, THERE IS PLENTY OF FRESHLY SPILT BLOOD, AND MUCH CONGEALED ABOUT THE WOUNDS. I DOUBT THAT THE MOST ACUTE EXAMINATION WILL FIND A WOUND THAT WAS NOT INFLICTED BY FANG OR CLAW.

"THIRD, THE PRINTS ABOUT THE VICTIM ARE OF THE FORE AND HIND FEET OF A WOLF, AND MUCH LARGER THAN THE ONES ON THE MUDDY BANK. WITNESS THEIR DEPTH. EVEN ON FIRM GROUND. ALSO THEIR NATURALLY UNEVEN SPACING. LET US FOLLOW THE CLUMSY, BLOODY TRAIL A WAYS. HA, SEE HOW THE SHAPE SUBTLY ALTERS. THERE IS NO FORGER IN THE WORLD SO SKILLED THAT HE COULD FAKE SUCH A PRINT — NEITHER HUMAN NOR BEAST, BUT SOMETHING IN BETWEEN.

"FOURTH, THERE WAS A FULL MOON LAST NIGHT."

"A FULL MOON?" THE INSPECTOR SAID. "WHAT HAS THAT TO DO WITH THIS MURDER?"

"I AM NOT SURE YOU CAN PROPERLY CALL THIS A MURDER," HOLMES SAID. "WHEN A WILD BEAST KILLS, DRIVEN BY THE SAVAGERY OF ITS NATURE, IS THAT MURDER?"

"I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK WITH THIS NEW CASE, INSPECTOR. I SUSPECT YOU WILL NEED IT."

HOLMES CLIMBED BACK INTO THE CARRIAGE. I FOLLOWED. AS THE DRIVER MOVED ON, THE INSPECTOR STARED DUMBLY AFTER US. ABRUPTLY HE WAVED AND RAN ALONGSIDE US, SHOUTING.

"BUT MONSIEUR HOLMES, WHAT SHALL I MAKE OF THIS? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?"

"HOLMES REPLIED DIFFIDENTLY, "I TELL YOU I APPREHENDED THE MURDERER OF THE THREE TURKS. YOUR CULPRIT FOR THIS SLAYING MAY TURN OUT TO BE THE REAL BEAST OF ARBBREVILLE."

"BUT MONSIEUR HOLMES! CAN YOU NOT HELP ME? GIVE ME ANOTHER CLUE?"

"ALL THE CLUES YOU NEED ARE BEFORE YOU. YET I SHALL SET YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: LOOK FOR A MAN WHO HAS BEEN WITH THE TRAVELLING FAIR FOR JUST LONGER THAN A MONTH."

THE INSPECTOR SHOUTED SOMETHING AFTER US, BUT BY NOW WE WERE TOO FAR OFF TO HEAR HIM CLEARLY. HOLMES PULLED HIS HEAD IN FROM THE WINDOW AND CHUCKLED.

"YOU ARE A PROUD MAN, SHERLOCK HOLMES," I SAID. THE INSPECTOR HAD MADE A GRAVE MISTAKE IN ACCUSING MY FRIEND OF BEING GUILTY OF ERROR.

"I AM A CONFIDENT MAN, WATSON. LOGIC AND FACTS STAND FIRM. WHEN THE IMPOSSIBLE IS TAKEN AWAY, WHATEVER CONCLUSION REMAINS, NO MATTER HOW IMPROBABLE, MUST BE TRUE."

I THOUGHT ON THAT FOR SOME TIME. FINALLY I SAID, "HOLMES, FORGIVE MY SLOWNESS, BUT WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU TOLD THE INSPECTOR TO LOOK FOR SOMEONE WHO HAD BEEN WITH THE FAIR JUST OVER A MONTH?"

"THERE WERE, IN TOTAL, SIX KILLINGS, WATSON, THE FIRST, OF THE SERB MAN, IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE ADMISSIONS OF THE TURKISH SECRET AGENTS. WE KNOW THAT THE THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH MURDERS WERE COMMITTED BY THE SERB ZARKO, MASQUERADING AS THE VOUDALAK. THAT LEAVES THE SECOND KILL-

ING, AND THIS LATEST ONE. THE ONE HAPPENED PRECISELY FOUR WEEKS AFTER THE OTHER — BOTH, THEN, ON NIGHTS OF THE FULL MOON. BOTH WERE WOMEN, WEAKER AND EASIER VICTIMS, NO DOUBT. THERE ARE OTHER ELEMENTS THAT WOULD LINK THESE TWO INCIDENTS, BUT I SHALL NOT BELABOUR THE POINT.

"SINCE THESE PECULIAR KILLINGS STARTED ONLY ONE MONTH AGO, IT STANDS TO REASON THAT THE IRRATIONAL KILLER HAS ONLY BEEN WITH THE FAIR A SHORT TIME. DO YOU NOT RECALL THAT THE COSSACK MOROZ TOLD US A NEW MAN

HAD COME TO REPLACE THE SERB WHO WAS MURDERED TWO MONTHS AGO?"

THAT WAS THE LAST WORD ON THE SUBJECT. WE BOARDED OUR TRAIN WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, AND HAD A PLEASANTLY UNEVENTFUL JOURNEY BACK TO LONDON. HOLMES SLEPT SOUNDLY THE ENTIRE TRIP. THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY I HAD, I QUIETLY RUMMAGED THROUGH HIS BAGS, FOUND THE COCAINE BOTTLE, AND CHUCKED IT OUT THE WINDOW. AT LAST MY PATIENT WAS WITHIN MY CONTROL. I WAS DETERMINED TO HEAL HIM, DESPITE HIS OBSTINATE NATURE.



END



IN THE SHADOW of Sherlock Holmes

A Biography of
SIR ARTHUR CONAN
DOYLE
by
GORDON DERRY

On another brief return to England to arrange some literary matters, Conan Doyle was convinced by a friend that the climate and clean air around Surrey would help his wife to recover. He commissioned an architect friend to build a house for him there.

In the fall, the Conan Doyle family travelled to the warmth of Italy, and then on to Egypt. They spent six months in a hotel a few miles outside of Cairo. The climate benefitted Conan Doyle as much as it did Louise. He thrived upon riding an Arabian stallion out over the Sahara desert every morning.

Once he journeyed up the Nile valley to the Sudan, a dangerous land where Dervishes raided and killed foreigners freely. This exciting experience inspired yet another novel, "The Tragedy of the Korosko", about a British tourist captured by a Dervish general.

Soon after, fighting broke out between the occupying British army and the Dervish forces. Conan Doyle, always a lover of adventure and supporter of the British Empire, wired the **Westminster Gazette** asking for a job as a war correspondent. This was the only way he could get to the front lines. Accepted, he rushed through perilous lands to the British camp.

He was not there long. It turned out that military operations would not start for weeks, and he was too worried about his wife's health to wait idly about.

The Conan Doyles returned to England in May 1896. They moved into their new house in the Surrey hills in October of the next year. Louise spent the last years of her life here, dimmed by chronic illness but in peace, while her husband energetically pursued his literary career.

At this point in Conan Doyle's life, a very important event occurred: he fell deeply, hopelessly - almost tragically in love with a young woman named Jean Leckie. She was in her early twenties, very attractive and intelligent, of strong character but very much a Victorian woman. Conan Doyle fell in love with her at first sight, and felt this strongly about her through the rest of his days. She felt the same way about him. They agreed on almost every matter, and never, ever quarrelled.

Yet Conan Doyle insisted on keeping the relationship platonic while Louise was still alive. Because of his compassion and chivalrous moral code, he was determined to respect his ailing wife's dignity, though all about him Edwardian England was rampant with marital indiscretions. It was a difficult often tortuous path he set himself, but he stuck to it until Louise died nine years later.

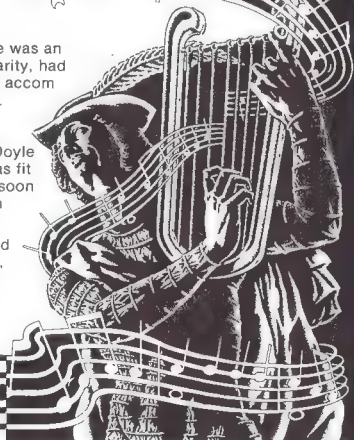
Not surprisingly, there are several parallels between Jean Leckie and the remarkable woman of Sherlock Holmes' life, Irene Adler. Miss Adler was very clever, not to mention being



stunningly beautiful and of strong character. She was an opera singer. Jean Leckie, to complete the similarity, had been trained for opera in Germany and was very accomplished, though she never worked professionally.

1899 saw the outbreak of the Boer War. Feeling obliged by honour to go and do his bit, Conan Doyle rushed to enlist. Although he was forty, he was as fit as ever. Because of his age he was refused, but soon after he was offered a position as senior surgeon at a field hospital for the South African army.

Arriving at the front in April 1900, he worked hard and tirelessly for three months. In his spare time, what little there was, he jotted down details of his experiences there. Conditions were bad at



the hospital. Once Conan Doyle was struck down by fever. Yet when he was given a break from his duties, he jumped to join a dangerous reconnaissance expedition. With canon and gunfire round him, a fine horse under him, and a rifle across his shoulder, he couldn't have been happier.

When he returned to England on July, he immediately set about writing a 500 page "Interim History of the War". Later, upon hearing verbal attacks from the Germans, Russians and French, he wrote a defense of the British actions in South Africa. This pamphlet was translated into nine languages, and distributed throughout Europe. It had a great effect on public opinion. It helped to save the British army and governors from disgrace.

Without resting from this feat, Conan Doyle dived into the turbulent political arena of the day. He ran for parliament in Edinburgh, but was sorely defeated.

Meanwhile, Sherlock Holmes had hit the stage in America. The play was raved over, and ran for 236 performances. With this play soon to open in London, Conan Doyle decided it might be best to revive the great detective. He wrote "The Hound of the Baskervilles", based upon an old English legend. This story was set at a point in Holmes' life before the tragedy at the Reichenbach Falls.

On the night when the play opened, Conan Doyle was given the opportunity to play Sherlock Holmes in real life. There occurred a robbery at the home of the Marquess of Anglesey, while he sat enthralled in the theater. On learning that his family's jewelry collection had been stolen, the Marquess asked Conan Doyle for help. Using the methods he had so often written about, Conan Doyle was able to trace the whereabouts of some of the jewels and deduce the identity of the thief.

The first installment of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" appeared in **The Strand** in January 1902, greeted with great public enthusiasm. That same year, Conan Doyle was knighted for his service to his country. He did not care for official decorations, and thought of refusing it. It is interesting to note that later, in 1925, he wrote a tale of Sherlock Holmes where it was stated that the detective **refused** a knighthood in 1902, for untold services in the South African War.

Conan Doyle went on to write a number of bizarre horror stories, reflecting his increasing interest in spiritualism and the occult.

He was offered a very large sum to write a new series of Holmes stories, on the condition that they show Holmes had actually survived the events at the Reichenbach Falls. He accepted. These new stories were full of timely references to current events in Britain and Europe, and more compellingly written than the previous ones.

By now, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was well on his way to becoming a rich man. Fame was closely attendant. In Cairo, he learned, the Holmes stories were being translated into Arabic and used as police training manuals.

Many people became ardently convinced that Sherlock Holmes was a real person, a myth that still has its adherents to this day. They wrote to him constantly, in care of Conan Doyle. The author would often reply to these letters with a card stating "there ain't no such person", and sign it **Dr. John Watson**.

Once he received a tradesman's bill addressed to Holmes. It was real; the tradesman believed that Conan Doyle had changed his name when he was knighted.

In 1903, Conan Doyle penned "Sir Nigel", a prequel to his historical romance, "The White Company". When he was not writing fiction, he spent much of his time attending numerous seances, enthusiastically investigating them. Though he came across many frauds, he remained sympathetic towards spiritualism.

Again, in 1906, Conan Doyle ran for parliament. Again, he was defeated. Soon after this, Louise died.

Conan Doyle was struck hard by this tragedy, for though he had Jean Leckie to look to, he had never ceased to be devoted to his first wife. He became ill due to anxiety, and could not work well. It was the George Edalji affair, and the opportunity to play Sherlock Holmes again, that drew him out of his depression.

George Edalji was a young man whose mother was English and father was Indian. Due to racial prejudice, the family had been harassed for several years where they lived in the Staffordshire countryside. George was accused of a series of bizarre mutilations of livestock from local farms, and in a mockery of justice he was tried and sent to prison.

Upon reading of the scanty, often muddled evidence presented, Conan Doyle became suspicious of the local police's handling of the case. He set out to investigate the matter himself. Quickly it became apparent that the police had been sloppy and even purposefully erroneous in their methods. Conan Doyle proved beyond a doubt that George Edalji was innocent.

The court officials would not grant a retrial. However, public outcry was so great that eventually, as a result, the Court of Criminal Appeal was created.

continued next issue

The
Adventure
of the
SIX
NAPOLEON'S

IN THE NEXT
ISSUE OF

Casey
Sherlock
Holmes



The Blackmail

R.R. #1
Lansdowne, Ontario
CANADA K0E 1C0
LETTER PAGE TITLE COURTESY
OF
KEITH A HOPE

Mr. Day

Finally someone has succeeded in a decent adaption of Holmes to comic form. I loved it! Having been a long time fan of Sherlock Holmes in both film and books I'm glad to see someone else who knows how to treat him. Keep up the GREAT work, I hope to see many more.

James Acres
1902 N 32nd St. Space #10
Phoenix Arizona 85024

...

Dan

Congratulations on a beautiful graphic masterpiece (*Cases of Sherlock Holmes #1*). As a long time fan of your brother Gene I have naturally followed your career also I can't wait for more of Holmes adventures. From beginning to end just beautiful. I'm a sixth grade teacher and I read Holmes' adventures regularly to my classes. I have a C.C. Doyle's complete works. Since I received the Renegade poster ad it has been on my bulletin board in class and much talked about. I'm going to see how the book looks on the opaque projector so I can share it with my class also.

Hope to meet you in Chicago this summer. My wife, son and I plan to attend the big convention.

Sincerely
Dave Schollaert
2128 Priscilla NW
Massillon Ohio 44646

Dear Dave,

About the Chicago Con held this summer, you must have seen the advertisements which ran in the *Renegade Comics* titles... the announcement that I would attend was a great surprise to me! Of course, it was a typographical error, I couldn't make it. Sorry... Maybe next year.

...

Dan,

Congratulations on a great first issue!
Alan Pellum
1720 Delaware #5
Berkeley, California 94703

...

Dear Den

I put down the mystery novel I was reading last evening when my son came home from his weekly foray to the comic shop in Kensington and handed me *Cases of*

Sherlock Holmes #1. I knew that it was coming out because I had seen a pre-publication poster but I had assumed that it would be like the old Classic Comics I had read as a child. I was delighted to see the words of Conan Doyle himself enhanced, not overwhelmed by the pictures. I was amused to see more than one familiar face in the crowd of characters populating the pages. Does Prince Charles know how important he is to the plot of 'The Beryl Coronet'?

I took typewriter in hand, as it were precisely because I think this series should continue. There were two relatively minor flaws in the production: One is typographical errors - about a half dozen that I noticed - and the other is the positioning of the text on certain of the pages.

I am an English teacher and so perhaps am more sensitive to mechanical errors than ever. I know what a demanding task proof reading is. Not only do I read (literally) thousands of essays every year, but I also proofread my son's fanzine *Ditkomania*. (You and my son Bill met at his comic shop in Weedsport, New York about four years ago when you were working on *Cerebus*.) I'd be glad to proofread for you as my contribution to a promising publication.

Perhaps it was my fatigue last evening (perhaps not) but I found the captioning of the text on pages nine and ten ("You shall learn nothing from me," said he with a passion.") confusing. I tried several different approaches before I knew where to go from there, if you'll pardon my syntax. I like the fact that the words don't just run up and down the page as they do in a conventional book, but there must be a way to be sure where the next paragraph begins.

An afterthought - numbering the pages might be a good idea when someone needs to refer to a particular passage in the story as I did then he must count the pages before he can make his point.

Sorry for all the complaining. I really did enjoy the book and I'm looking forward to issue #2!

Sincerely
Sally Hai
10 Farm Hill Road
Middletown Connecticut

...

Dear Renegade Press

I must confess having no prior knowledge of your reputation sighting your *Cases of Sherlock Holmes* sent a numbing chill

throughout my body.

Contrary to your probable assumptions my first thought was not one of joy but sheer terror. Alas, some glory-seekers had finally leached the rights to such a character as Sherlock Holmes and now sure-y exploitation and ruination were to follow with so-called new adventures. Was there no sanctuary for absolute literary achievement to flourish, in its own right down through the generations?

This question unanswered, needless to say I became irate.

But wait the splash page!

The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet? What was this - an actual Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Story put to panelistic bubbles. I was agast! I turned the page.

Homes said I as I stood one morning in our bow window looking down the street. Here is a madman coming along. It seems rather sad that his relatives should allow him to come out alone.

At this point your previous probable assumptions overwhelmed me.

For you see before me I held glorious Sir Arthur Conan Doyle literature (including my favourite open paragraph next to the one in *Devils Foot*) laudably intermingled with magnificent sketches. Sketches that not only brought to life the characters of Holmes and Watson but proudly portrayed the greatest scene characterization of the irrepressible duo - I am speaking, of course of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce.

Bravo to all involved in this project - it is good to know that honour and chivalry remain to heart amongst artists.

Sincerely

Steven Tracy
1608 32nd Ave
Gulfport, MS 39501

P.S. The comic medium has seen a breakthrough and Renegade has brought it about.

...

I had a great response from participants in the *Cases of Sherlock Holmes* Letter Page Contest. Thanks to all for your original ideas. It was a tough decision but congratulations go to:

Keith A. Hope Age 17
45 Shelley Lane, Great Neck, N.Y.

for his title, "The Blackmail." 'Y'all are encouraged to send your letters (and comments) to:

The Blackmail
RR #1, Lansdowne, Ont.
K0E 1L0

Dan Day

ORIGINAL ARTWORK FOR SALE!

COVERS (Black & White)

AZTEC ACE 8
AZTEC ACE 10
AZTEC ACE 12
AZTEC ACE 13
AZTEC ACE ADDS - Bridget in Clock

VIGILANTE 24
VIGILANTE 25
VIGILANTE ANNUAL 1

\$ 100.00

INTERIOR PAGES

AZTEC ACE 3: Pages 2, 22, 25
AZTEC ACE 4: Pages 16, 17, 22
AZTEC ACE 5: Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 25
AZTEC ACE 6: Pages 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
AZTEC ACE 7: Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26
AZTEC ACE 8: Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23
AZTEC ACE 10: Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
AZTEC ACE 11: Pages 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
AZTEC ACE 12: Pages 1, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24
AZTEC ACE 13: Pages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 24, 25
AZTEC ACE 15: Pages 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26
BATMAN AND THE OUTSIDERS 13: Pages 11, 13, 14, 16
SWAMPTHING 20: Pages 6, 7, 13
CEREBUS 64: Pages 22, 23, 25
CEREBUS 65: Pages 22, 23, 24
EPIC 32: Pages 87, 88, 89, 90
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VORTEX 6: Pages 32, 33, 34
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MS. TREE #33

MS. TREE #33

written by: Max Collins

art by: Terry Beatty and Gary Kato

The death of a beautiful porn star and the search for a teen-age runaway sends Ms. Tree into the sleazy underground world of sex and violence for sale, an investigation complicated by the resurgence of her stormy relationship with social worker, Glenn Harwood.

MURDER #3

MURDER #3

art and stories by: Alex Toth, Allen Peterson, Rich Margopoulos, Dan Day and Steve Ditko.

edited by: Robin Snyder

This issue contains more shocking stories by both masters of the field and a newcomer to comics, Allen Peterson. "My Brother" by Steve Ditko is a tale of brother vs brother, and the winner will be judge, jury and executioner! Margopoulos and Day give twisted, dark beauty to Edgar Allan Poe's "Morella" and Allen Peterson's story of a condemned man's last minutes begins where most stories end. Cover painting by Alex Toth.



STRATA #4

STRATA #4

written by: Joe Judt

pencilled by: Ray Murtaugh

inked by: Jim Brozman

This issue is an all-outswashbuckling adventure! Flambeau's commando team runs wild in the Iron City in a futile (but funny) attempt to avoid capture. Also, a new romance appears. This issue was originally scheduled to appear in July.

Also shipping this month: Strata free shop poster (see right)



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ETERNITY SMITH #3

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In the third issue of Eternity Smith the adventure continues; and the mystery deepens!

This time, Eternity fights a duel to the death with the cyborg assassin TIK, plus, the secrets of Jason Thorne are revealed! Smith fights alone in his enemy's lair! All of this and more on sale in October!!



CASES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES #4

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art by: Dan Dan (cover by Dan and David Day)
story by: Arthur Conan Doyle

"The Adventure of the Six Napoleons"

What dark fascination does the six Napoleons possess, in order to drive a man to such utter madness that he would commit burglary and even murder in order to first obtain, then destroy, the likenesses of the great emperor?

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